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News Release

ICE ARRESTS LEADERS OF 2 ALIEN SMUGGLING NETWORKS

Criminal organizations smuggled 600 aliens, profited \$1.6 million in past two years

EL PASO, Texas — Three masterminds of two major alien smuggling organizations and nine of their associates were arrested Friday, following a Dec. 21 sealed indictment charging them with smuggling and transporting more than 600 aliens from the El Paso area to Dallas and beyond in the past two years. Friday's arrests were announced by Kyle Hutchins, special agent-in-charge of the El Paso office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

ICE special agents assisted by U.S. Border Patrol agents late last week arrested 12 of 16 people named in two sealed indictments returned Dec. 21 by an El Paso federal grand jury. The indictments were unsealed Jan. 6 just before the arrests. The defendants are charged with conspiracy to smuggle aliens. The indictments name 14 El Paso County residents and two individuals from Dallas, and are the result of an ICE investigation that spanned more than two years.

Three of the defendants remain at large, and another, Roger Alvin Auxter, is already in La Tuna Federal Correctional Institute on a previous alien smuggling conviction. The 54-year-old truck driver was arrested in Fort Worth in 2004 after ICE special agents discovered 79 illegal aliens in his trailer.

Mike Price, 53, and his wife Fabiola del Carmen Moguel de Price, 39, and Sam Jarvis, 52, headed two separate organizations that generated more than \$1.6 million in smuggling fees between March 2003 and October 2005. Jarvis and the Prices, all of Socorro, Texas, originally worked together. However in 2003, the Prices left the Jarvis organization to establish their own alien smuggling criminal enterprise.

The ICE investigation revealed Jarvis and both Prices headed two networks that smuggled Brazilians, Colombians, Hondurans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Nicaraguans, Ecuadorans, and Mexicans. Depending on the nationality, they charged each alien between \$1,500 and \$6,000 to be smuggled into the United States, and were then transported to: Arizona, Colorado, Oklahoma, Illinois, Florida and New York.

Both organizations housed the aliens in “drop houses” throughout El Paso County after smuggling them into the United States from Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico.

“These unscrupulous smugglers operate ruthlessly and with no regard for the human beings whose lives they endanger,” Hutchins said. “For example, during this investigation our special agents encountered various groups with 35 to 79 people crammed in trailers for the non-stop nine-hour trip to Dallas from El Paso with no food and limited water. The only way to enter or exit the trailers was through trailer doors, which were sometimes pad-locked.”

The following defendants are named in an indictment charged with conspiracy to smuggle aliens:

Mike Price, aka “Panocho,” 53; his wife, Fabiola, aka, “La Huera,” 39; Ronald Dean Anglin, aka “Domino,” 54; Juan Carlos Rios, 31; Lluvia Christa Pantoja, 24; Pedro Cruz Moreno, 26; Melissa Santibañez, 35; Ruth Dolores Santibañez, 33; Pedro Escobar, 27; and Marco Antonio Moguel-Lozano, aka “Huero,” 28.

One of the smuggling loads intercepted during the investigation was of 28 illegal aliens that Anglin, co-leader of the Price organization, attempted to smuggle past the U.S. Border Patrol checkpoint near Sierra Blanca, Texas. He was scheduled to deliver the aliens to Juan Carlos Rios, the lead organizer in Dallas. The aliens were concealed in a large plywood box covered with a blue tarp on top of a flatbed trailer.

The following are named in a second indictment charging them with conspiracy to smuggle aliens:

Sam Jarvis; Raul Lorenzo Lezama-Landeros, 35; Maria Guadalupe Castro, aka “Maria Hernandez,” 46; Michel Rodriguez-Rincon, aka “Charro,” 27; Fermin Rodulfo Dominguez, aka “Mecate,” 37, and Auxter.

Jarvis, leader and organizer of one of the criminal networks, offered drivers of 18-wheel rigs about \$300 for each illegal alien they concealed and transported to the Dallas area in their trailers.

Eleven of the defendants arrested Friday remain in the El Paso County Jail today. Rios, who was arrested in Dallas, is in custody there. The El Paso defendants are scheduled to go before a federal magistrate Monday afternoon.

Dominguez and Lezama-Landeros, of El Paso, and Maria Castro, of Dallas, remain at large.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Brandy Gardes is prosecuting this case on behalf of the government.

An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process of law.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.